

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

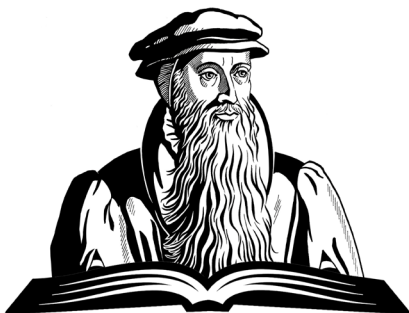
## Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

# STUDY GUIDE

*Module 1:*  
**INTRODUCTION and  
THE DOCTRINE OF FIRST PRINCIPLES**

*Lecture 6:*  
**PROPERTIES OF INSPIRED SCRIPTURE**



**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

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*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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## STUDY GUIDE

Module 1

### *Introduction, and The Doctrine of First Principles*

*Introduction:*

1. Methodology
2. Creeds and Confessions

*The Doctrine of First Principles:*

3. Scripture
4. Revelation
5. The Inspiration of Scripture
- 6. Properties of Inspired Scripture**
7. The Canon of Holy Scripture
8. Preservation and Translation of Scripture
9. Interpretation of Scripture
10. The Continuity of Scripture

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## STUDY GUIDE

Module 1:

THE DOCTRINE OF FIRST PRINCIPLES

Lecture 6:

# Properties of Inspired Scripture

### ***Introduction***

Disagreements and disputes in a family can often be solved by asking the question, “Who is in charge?” Christians can find themselves in similar circumstances, and the answer to this question provides the solution. The Bible is God’s Word, and it carries God’s authority. Those authoritative Scriptures are both clear and fully sufficient for us to know God’s will. An appeal to the Bible, therefore, settles all disputes and controversies within the church.

**Theme:** *The Properties of Inspired Scripture.*

### **I. Scriptural Basis**

*“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”—2 Thessalonians 2:13.*

1. The origin of the Word is not from among mere men, but from the Lord himself.
2. God’s Word is fully sufficient for our salvation, and it works effectually in them that believe.

### **Questions:**

1. Please explain how the passage in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 introduces us to the divine authority of Scripture, and to some other properties of the Bible that flow from that authority.

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## **II. Doctrinal Overview**

### **1. The authority of Scripture**

- a. Summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 1, paragraphs 4 and 5.
- b. An objective witness—Scripture asserts that it is the Word of God.
- c. The Scriptures also demonstrate evidence of their divine origins by their agreement.
- d. Another line of evidence is with regards to their power.
- e. The internal testimony of the Spirit

### **2. The sufficiency of Scripture.**

- a. Summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 1, paragraph 6.
- b. All that we need for life and godliness, or for faith and practice is found in the Bible itself.

### **3. The clarity (perspicuity) of Scripture.**

- a. Summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 1, paragraph 7.
- b. Scripture is clear, or perspicuous, in reference to everything that is necessary for us to know for our salvation.
- c. The Scriptures are not equally clear in every part or in relation to every doctrine.

### **4. The Scriptures are the supreme judge in controversies.**

- a. Summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 1, paragraph 10.
- b. The original Hebrew and Greek texts.

### **Questions:**

1. How do we know that the Scriptures are self-attesting and self-authenticating? Please prove this doctrine from the Scriptures.

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2. What is the internal testimony of the Spirit? Is it absolutely necessary for us to understand the Bible?

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3. What does the sufficiency of Scripture mean for us? What are some of the things which might direct us, apart from the Bible, but which threaten the sufficiency of Scripture?

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4. What are the two parts of understanding the clarity of Scripture? How does God counsel his church regarding the difficult things of Scripture?

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5. Who is the judge, and has the final word to settle theological controversies? Explain your answer.

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**III. Polemical Exposition**

**1. The authority of Scripture.**

- a. No written tradition can exist alongside of Scripture.

**2. The sufficiency of Scripture**—several categories:

- 1. In the arena of Worship.
- b. The philosophy of ministry.
- c. “New revelations”?
- d. Understanding biblical godliness.
- e. Helpful in solving spiritual problems.

**3. The clarity or perspicuity of Scripture.**

Error 1: *The Bible is too difficult for the average person to understand.*

Error 2: *The Bible is written for simple souls, and all of Scripture can be equally understood by everyone, so the only interpreter we need is the Holy Spirit.*

**4. The Scripture as the supreme judge in controversies.**

- a. Error of exalting the church and the Pope.

**Questions:**

1. What are the dangers of elevating any sorts of traditions as authoritative alongside the Word of God?

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2. How does the sufficiency of Scripture direct us regarding worship, church government, and the philosophy of ministry?

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3. How should we react to someone who claims they received a new revelation? Which church groups typically hold to this idea?

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4. What is the right way to define biblical godliness?

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5. How can a believer respond to those two opposing errors regarding clarity of Scripture?

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**IV. Practical Exposition**

**1. The authority of Scripture.**

a. Receiving and obeying the Word of God.

**2. The sufficiency of Scripture.**

a. Vital for knowing God's will. Learn the Father's will through Christ's work as a prophet, being taught by the Spirit in your heart.

**3. The clarity of Scripture.**

a. Fervent prayer and development of the ability to study Scripture well.

**4. The Scripture as the supreme judge in controversies.**

a. The believer and the church corporately are to hold fast to the form of sound words.

**Questions:**

1. How is obedience a necessary application to our response to the authority of Scripture?

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2. How can a Christian seek to know God's will?

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3. What are some of the beneficial ways to study God's Word?

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4. What is the common and shared responsibility of both the individual believer and the corporate church with regard to the Scripture as the supreme judge in controversies?

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**V. Self-Reflection**

1. Do you have a good plan for reading and studying the Bible? You could ask for advice or resources from faithful ministers, but please study the Word of God prayerfully, and submissively. What encouragements have you received from meditating on the Word of God and putting God's instruction into practice in your own life?

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